



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Galveston District

The Sand Castle

"A newsletter by and for the employees of the Galveston District"



Cover: Remains of a shipwreck in Orange Harbor Island Channel.

On the right: An abandoned submarine dock. Story and pictures are on pgs. 10-11.



The Sand Castle

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The Sand Castle

www.swg.usace.army.mil

**A newsletter for and by
the employees of the
Galveston District**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please include an address and phone number on all letters. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity, style, and space and to use them electronically and in print.

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I want to take this opportunity to provide you with information on current and pending initiatives resulting from the 17–18 January 2001 offsite. We have a world-class workforce and highly professional team. You demonstrate this on a daily basis in providing critical support to our Nation. Galveston District consistently shines and sets the standards at events and presentations both inside and outside of the Corps.

With our District's demonstrated performance, poor performance concerns might appear inconsistent. Yet, addressing performance was one of the major themes reiterated throughout the employee survey responses last fall. The majority of effort during the 17-18 January 2001 offsite also focused on this area. Although all levels of the District recognize the need to address performance problems, we need to align our efforts with the entire performance and evaluation process.

The Army uses the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES) as the basic framework for performance dialogues and measurement. We also received guidance from our senior leadership in USACE to conduct quarterly counseling with our employees and to improve implementation of the Indi-

“Galveston District consistently shines and sets the standards at events and presentations both inside and outside of the Corps.”

vidual Development Plan (IDP) for willing employees. Each of you should expect your supervisor to communicate clear expectations and feedback at least quarterly on how you are doing in meeting the job requirements. The following paragraphs will address seven areas related to performance and evaluation. Included are the actions you should expect to happen, now and in the future.

Job descriptions. The dialogue between supervisor and employee begins with the foundation of expectations. The supervisor and employee review the job description to ensure the position

description accurately describes the duties and responsibilities of the position. Since many job descriptions are generic, the supervisor must follow this review with a discussion of his or her expectations and the particular requirements of each position. You should expect your supervisor to review your job description with you and determine if it reasonably reflects actual duties and responsibilities NLT 30 June 2001 and at the beginning of each rating period after that. If it does, your supervisor will document this during counseling. If it does not and it cannot be resolved, I have directed the supervisor to forward it to the Division or Office Chief for review and resolution. If Division or Office Chief needs assistance to correct, then he or she will identify the problem to the Deputy Commander.

Performance objectives/standards. Once a job description reasonably reflects actual duties and responsibilities, the supervisor and employee can now develop annual performance objectives/standards. The rated employee is encouraged to draft the objectives/standards, with the supervisor concurring or adjusting them in conjunction with the employee. The objectives/standards must be realistic and attainable; the measurement noted must provide room to exceed. In continuing communications, the supervisor and employee discuss and sign the performance objectives/standards. Reiterated throughout the offsite, was the need for supervisors to be accountable and for supervisors to hold employees accountable. You should expect to have performance objectives/standards that are realistic, attainable and measurable NLT 30 March 2001 and at the beginning of each rating period after that.



COL Nicholas J. Buechler

Continued on next page....

“Counseling is a continual dialogue through which you and your supervisor can reiterate, update or refine the expectations. Counseling provides the opportunity to receive and give immediate feedback between supervisor and employee.”

Counseling. Both quarterly and situational (as needed) counseling provides the opportunity for feedback on how well you understand the expectations and how well you are doing in meeting those expectations. Counseling is a continual dialogue through which you and your supervisor can reiterate, update or refine the expectations. Counseling provides the opportunity to receive and give immediate feedback between supervisor and employee. Most of us conduct counseling each day on an informal basis. You should expect to conduct at least quarterly counseling with your supervisor NLT the end of each FY Quarter and as needed (situational).

Training. One of the four individual responsibilities the Chief of Engineers charges each of us with is to “Know your job”. This applies to all of us. Each of us must work closely with our supervisors to identify the training required to maintain or increase our competencies and ability to be high performance team members. The time to do this is when we establish the annual performance standards. We then input these requirements into the District Training Plan and your Individual Development Plan (IDP) (if applicable). This effort continues through quarterly and situational counseling. The District’s recent Training OM, SWGOM 690-400-1, Training and Development, dated 14 November 2000 (located on our Intranet) provides procedures for developing training requirements and training plans. The Chief of Engineers is also directing us to

establish IDPs. As stated in our negotiated agreement, “All employees are encouraged to develop and maintain an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in conjunction with their supervisor.” IDPs are not mandatory. They are not required for individuals on term or temporary appointments. However, those employees declining to develop and maintain an IDP must do so in writing. You should expect to identify your training requirements with your supervisor and have input into the District Training Plan IAW the Training and Development OM, SWGOM 690-400-1 NLT 30 March 2001. This should occur at the beginning of each rating period after that. Secondly, expect to develop an IDP or in writing decline an IDP NLT 30 June 2001.

Addressing poor performance. This is one of the most difficult challenges we must face and will face. The first step is to identify the cause of poor performance. Opening communications and counseling may offer a solution and improve performance. I encourage early consultation with HR and the Union. Some situations may require supplementing with third party alternatives such as Employee Assistance Program and Alternative Dispute Resolution. You can expect the documentation of poor performance and improvement plans in line with our quarterly and situational counseling efforts. In cooperation with the District Partnership Council, I will also encourage the development of a District SOP pertaining to performance. This SOP will provide consistent procedures to follow in addressing poor performance and comply with Article XVIII, Section 4, of the negotiated agreement for bargaining unit employees.

“Recognizing good or outstanding performance is just as important as addressing poor performance.”



H E A D Q U A R T E R ' S M E S S A G E

To All U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Employees:

"Synergy is the fruit of thinking win-win and seeking first to understand. It's not compromise ... It's the creation of third alternatives that are genuinely better than solutions individuals could ever come up with on their own."

Stephen R. Covey

Our Corps of Engineers serves the Nation well. We are a unique and extremely important national resource. The collective skills and the energy of our dedicated workforce make this possible. I'm writing to ask for your commitment to an idea. The fruit that synergy creates will empower us to serve the Nation even better. As always, I need you to make it a reality.

ESSAYONS!

Bob Flowers

Recognizing deserving employees.

Recognizing good or outstanding performance is just as important as addressing poor performance. The District has an Incentive Awards Policy (SWGOM 672-1-1, also located on our Intranet) to guide efforts in rewarding deserving employees. I want to expand our forum for sharing such rewards by scheduling quarterly awards ceremonies. Engineer Day will cover the Third Quarter and others may be combined with District town hall meetings. You can expect us to follow and use the District Incentive Awards Policy to recognize deserving employees. You can also expect a scheduled and announced District Awards Ceremony every quarter, starting in March 2001.

Consistent Application of Policies. To provide a more consistent application of policies, rules and regulations within the District, all supervisors must communicate with each other more often. This includes training and discussions on such topics as timekeeping, TAPES, leave sharing, dealing with poor performance, etc. I am establishing monthly brown-bag sessions with all supervisors to discuss specific topics and to share successes and concerns. Management and the Union will jointly develop this SOP to include procedures for documenting performance and corrective action steps in dealing with

"All supervisors must communicate with each other more often. This includes training and discussions on such topics as timekeeping, TAPES, leave sharing, dealing with poor performance, etc."

poor performance. You can expect a more consistent application of policies, rules and regulations as we conduct these monthly sessions beginning in March 2001.

Monthly informal chats with a cross-section of District employees and encourage our local union president to attend. Subjects will include, but not be limited to the topics in this letter. I consider the monthly brown-bag sessions with supervisors a part of the assessment process as well. Depending on the feedback, I envision another employee survey and/or team building sessions. You can expect an invitation to one or more of the monthly chat sessions. I am directing the Deputy Commander to schedule the sessions and work through an invitation process beginning in March 2001.

We all have a stake in taking the District to the next level. **Essayons!**

Safety on the Corps' lakes was the subject of a district-wide meeting held at the Lewisville Lake Project Office. Southwestern Division rangers, lake managers, safety and public affairs people met to discuss growing concerns over water safety on Corps lakes and waterways.



Fort Worth and Tulsa districts hold the division's unenviable lead in water safety problems, logically, they have the most lakes.

Tulsa last year had 27 water related deaths on its lakes. That was a drop from its average of 40 deaths per year. Tulsa has 750 miles of lake shoreline and eight rangers who have gone from recording the number of fatalities to trying to stop them. In all of SWD, there were 185 drownings last year. The water safety problem is not unique to SWD, to the east Savannah District had 80 drowning over the last year.

Little Rock handles 16 lakes while Fort Worth has 25 lakes. Last year was a bad year for them — and included multiple drowning accidents. "Too many situations of people on the lake who can't swim and have no life jackets," said Tim Gibson of the Fort Worth District.

In the trading of ideas to cut the statistics of water related deaths and accidents, each district presented a briefing on its water

safety activities.

Tulsa focused on education of fourth and fifth grade public school classes. Statistics show the district contacted 346,098 through their water safety campaign. Fort Worth's public speaker program showed over 20,000 school contacts. They also utilize commercial advertising and a mobile outdoors display to promote water safety.

Little Rock District administers its water safety program through a Water Safety Team that has a list of 17 goals involving activities within the district and community to promote water safety. One activity included an arrangement with Wal-Mart to provide exposure to a safety video. Little Rock also made use of a "I am the next person to drown" silhouette, bringing home the hard facts of ignoring water safety.

Galveston District has only a small amount of boating on COE owned areas. There is no boating at the Addicks/Barker reservoirs, leaving the newly

completed Wallisville Lake Project as its main target for a water safety program.

All districts reiterated the problem of communicating with non-English speaking boaters. Seattle District was mentioned as a model in reaching Hispanics through signs and posters.

Some of the ideas mentioned for a water safety campaign included the use of "Don't be Next" signs; waiving user fees for those wearing personal flotation device; developing a life jacket program of loaning the PFD's (possibly donated by manufacturers) or exchanging a child's vest for a larger size as the child grows.

Locally, the Corps is proposing a partnership with the Safe Kids, TX and the Houston Safe Boating Council to acquaint them with the district's water safety materials.

R E T I R E M E N T

After 35 years of government service, Frank Marullo, Civil Engineering Tech. in charge of boat maintenance and Ft. Point reservation, says goodbye.



Frank and family pose for the camera with his Certificate of Appreciation for all his hard work.



Frank and his wife, Brenda, cut the cake.



A number of Corps employees, co-workers, and friends turned out for the retirement party.



Karl Brown demonstrates how much he is going to miss Frank!



Frank visits with employees while enjoying cake and punch in Operations.



Judie Lester watches as Sandra Morrison and Loretta Carnes cut the cake.

THE BIG PICTURE

WHERE DO WE FIT IN?



By Paula Wise

You work for the Corps of Engineers. As part of the Corps, you also work for the Army. Right? Some of us have been working for the Corps of Engineers for 5-10 years or more and still do not know how our work at the Galveston District supports the Corps organization as a whole, or the Army and the nation for that matter.

As most of us know, our organization now has its 50th Chief, Lt. General Robert B. Flowers. According to Lt. General Flowers, “the Army Corps of Engineers is vitally important to the Nation and vital to the livelihood of most Americans—this has not changed for 225 years. The Army Corps of Engineers is also an essential part of the greatest Army in the world.” Okay, so how does that translate to the Galveston District work force? Well, before you can really grasp how you support the Corps organization and the Army, it is important first to understand some of the Corps’ history.

The Corps of Engineers was formed during the American War for Independence to provide military engineering support to the Congressional Army during battle. Since its creation, the Corps has fought in every conflict that the U.S. has been involved in since that time. The Corps abilities to serve the Army can be seen in numerous military actions. The Battle of Bunker Hill (1775), the Battle of 1812, the Mexican War (1848), the Civil War (1861-1865), the construction of the Panama Canal (1889), World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War are just a few.

So how does the Galveston District and the Corps really support the Army and the nation? The

Army, as well as the other Armed Forces, is responsible for maintaining the security of our nation for the American citizens. In order to perform this tremendous responsibility, the Department of Defense developed what is referred to as the “National Military Strategy.” The national military strategy describes the critical role of the Armed Forces in achieving our Nation’s security objectives.

Today, as in the past, the Corps organization provides support to the Armed Forces in peace and in wartime, both in the U.S. and overseas. The goals of the Corps of Engineers in supporting the Army are to provide 1) cradle-to-grave (life-cycle) engineering and infrastructure support, 2) research and development, and 3) continuous initiatives to improve Army support. The Corps of Engineers military engineers that supported the Army in the past are now also responsible for planning, designing and supervising the construction of facilities for the Armed Forces to ensure military combat readiness. Today, the Corps is responsible for designing and managing the construction for homes, schools, hospitals, day care centers, office buildings, airfields, warehouses and training ranges for military members and their families. Buying, managing, and disposing of land for the Army and Air Force is just another service that the Corps of Engineers provides to the Armed Forces in support of the national military strategy.

So the Corps, as an agency really does support the Army and the national military strategy, but how does the Galveston District assist the Armed Forces in achieving the goals and objectives of the national military strategy? The Galveston District is principally a civil works district with a mission of becoming a center of excellence for coastal navigation and environmental restoration. There is very little true military work (e.g. design and construction of housing, installations, etc.) performed by our District. The other three districts in our Division (Tulsa, Little Rock and Ft. Worth) provide the majority of military support. However, even though our District is principally a civil works district, we still have an active role in supporting the military, and ultimately protecting our nation’s security.

One main element in our District that supports the military is our Real Estate Division. They provide a full range of services (appraisals, acquisition, management, and disposal of land) for military activities. During Desert Storm/ Desert Shield, our Real Estate Division was responsible for acquiring the use of the Barbours Cut Terminal on the Houston Ship Channel (a Federal navigation project designed, constructed and maintained by our District) for shipment of military equipment overseas.

Real estate personnel also provided support during the military operations in Kosovo and Bosnia. In those actions, Galveston District real estate personnel supported the Contingency Real Estate Support Team (CREST). CREST was created by the Corps of Engineers and is designed to provide contingency planning and operational support to military operations or operations other than war. Under CREST, Galveston District employees serve as the “theater” engineer’s real estate staff.

Other than our real estate support to the military, the Galveston District is also deeply involved in national mobilization responsibility, focusing on military mobilization and preparedness which can be brought into play in the event of major hostilities. These support efforts include shipment of Department of Defense equipment. Our district also provides a more indirect, but no less important, support to the national military strategy by maintaining our District’s navigable waterways and harbors. In maintaining navigable waterways and harbors, the Galveston District provides crucial mobilization capabilities necessary for rapid response to potential threats and/or crises.

In addition to real estate, our Emergency

Operations Division provides support during natural disasters, emergency situations and national threats. Emergency operation support can involve deploying district personnel for hurricane disaster relief, coordinating the removal of vessels as a result of

terrorist activities, supporting mobilization efforts, and working with reserve forces in preparation for deployment overseas. The District also inspects loading, staging and port facilities prior to receiving or deploying equipment, and maintains infrastructure to support mobilization efforts (e.g. reinforcing bridges to sustain the weight of equipment being mobilized).

However, none of our Galveston District support can be performed without assistance from our Logistics Management Office. They are a crucial element in making all of the plans come together. They provide logistical management over maintenance of equipment, acquisition of supplies, availability of facilities and travel, and scheduling to meet the required deadlines.

This is just an overview of the support efforts that Corps of Engineers and the Galveston District provide to the military. Even so, you can see that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Galveston District have a tremendous responsibility and provide a great service to our Armed Forces in protecting our nation’s security. Even a civil works district like Galveston provides support to the Army in peacetime pursuits, during natural emergencies, and in times of war. Now you know how you fit into the bigger picture of the Corps, the military, and the nation. Remember, as trivial as your job may seem, you support an organization that has a vital role in maintaining our nation’s security.

Today, the Corps organization is known and recognized as the world’s premier engineering organization responsible for:

- 1) maintaining the nation’s navigable waterways,
- 2) reducing flooding and flood damage,
- 3) minimizing and preventing damage to the environment,
- 4) responding to disasters and emergencies,
- 5) building a strong military,
- 6) supporting others by providing expertise to other agencies, state and local governments, academia and foreign nations
- 7) researching and developing new solutions for the nation and the Armed Forces.

BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SABINE

by PBS&J

The end of World War I marked the end of wooden shipbuilding by the U.S. government. Hundreds of incomplete and unused wooden vessels, some as large as 300 feet and equipped with both sailing masts and steam engines, were disposed of at the war's end. Many were abandoned in the Sabine River between Texas and Louisiana. Their remains, as well as numerous other vessels and artifacts from the area's rich maritime history, settled on the river bottom. Today, a survey conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers is helping to discover just what really lies at the bottom of the waterways near the Port of Orange.

Along the Sabine River, at a point just north of the Gulf of Mexico on the Texas-Louisiana border, lies the Port of Orange, an area whose past has been shaped by more than a century of commercial and military shipping activity. Yet maritime history and the shipbuilding industry that has largely abandoned the area have taken their toll, leaving the waterway and its shoreline filled with obstructions and debris that pose threats to navigation.

This past year, the Galveston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began working with community organizations to assist in a major effort to document historic structures and begin the cleanup of portions of the Sabine River, the Orange Harbor Island Channel, Cow Bayou, and Adams Bayou. The District tasked PBS&J, an environmental consulting contractor, with conducting an intensive marine remote-sensing survey to identify those objects that could pose a potential threat to navigation and/or that could be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

"Because we know there are likely to be historically significant shipwrecks in the project area, we had to first acquire special permits from the Texas Historical Commission and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology. Then we went in with our survey vessel towing an array of geophysical instruments, including a magnetometer, a side-scan sonar,



At the end of World War I, incomplete and unused wooden vessels, were abandoned in the area. It is also known that many confederate merchant vessels sank there during the storm in 1865.



Submerged objects range from a fence in the water to boat wrecks to sunken vessels to derelict drylocks. Cost of removing the derelict drylocks is estimated at \$450,000, depending upon the placement and condition of the object.



Submersed objects are easily seen in the Sabine River during an exceptionally low tide. Sunken ships, shown at the left create navigational hazards dangerous to river traffic.

and an echo-sounder. To protect our boat and sensors from colliding with obstructions, we also deployed a forward-scanning sonar, giving the helmsman a real-time image of the bottom ahead of us,” said PBS&J Project Manager Bob Gearhart.

The survey is the first step in providing tentative identification to those objects lying on the river bottom. Objectives included compiling a comprehensive list of all hazards to navigation, pipelines, wells and potentially historic shipwrecks. Although detailed analyses of the survey results were still forthcoming when this article was prepared, expectations were high that the findings will provide a window

into the past. Local history buffs believe there are five ship graveyards in the area, including 20 to 26 wooden military ships sunk at the end of World War I and as many as 20 Confederate merchant vessels that sank during a storm in 1865. The wreckage in these areas is expected to be varied and to hold significant cultural value. In addition to the cultural benefits that are expected to result from this survey are the economic and aesthetic benefits of helping to unclog the waterways by eliminating debris and obstacles. Local interests supporting this effort hope to encourage recreational activities while promoting rejuvenation of waterfront properties.

No federal agency has closer ties to the infrastructure of our nation than the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). More than 35,000 USACE civilian and military engineers, scientists, and other specialists work to provide responsive services in engineering and environmental matters across the nation.

The Galveston District of the USACE is responsible for providing civil works support along a 350-mile-wide arc of the Texas Gulf Coast, from the Texas-Louisiana border to the Mexican border. It was established in 1880, just 35 years after Texas became a state, and since its beginning, the District has been charged with conducting river and harbor improvements along the Texas Gulf Coast. The District’s recent work at the Port of Orange exemplifies how the USACE works with communities to help them achieve their goals as well as carry out its own mission.

Ernie's Bench

Engineering Branch places Ernie's Wittig's bench next to his tree in honor of all his hard work.



Pictured are Deputy Chief of Engineering, David Campbell; Steve Wipff, and Mike Sells of General Engineering.



New Addresses

Regulatory Office in Corpus Christi

5151 Flynn Parkway, Suite 306
Corpus Christi, TX 78411

361-814-5847 office general

361-814-5851 Mark Pattillo

361-814-5850 Lloyd Mullins

361-814-0026 Marie Pattillo

361-814-0065 John Wong

361-814-5912 Fax

Hebbronville Border Patrol Station Project Office

Phone number: 361-527-5227

Fax number: 361-527-5277

REMINDER:



Just a reminder that
Defensive Driving is sched-
uled for March 29, 2001,
Room 185. Minimum of 15
required. Defensive driving

is required every four years for employees
that drive a government vehicle as part of
their official duties. Attendees are deter-
mined by supervisors; requests submitted
directly to the safety office will not be hon-
ored. The defensive driving read only data
base can be viewed at S:SO\defensive driving.

Announcement:



Incoming Commanders

- COL Bob Suthard (SWT)
- COL Benjamin Butler (SWL)
- COL Len Waterworth (SWG)

National Black Engineer of the Year Awards Conference

Byron Williams, Civil Engineer in Planning, represented the Galveston District at the National Black Engineer of the Year Awards Conference February 8-10th in Baltimore, Maryland.

The first day of the conference included the 5th Annual USACE Workshop on "Developing a Capable Workforce". Deputy Chief of Engineers Major General Milton Hunter was the keynote speaker as a result of an unexpected absence of the Chief of Engineers, General Robert Flowers.

He stressed Study Team Member attendance and participation from start to finish of all

projects.

Other events included a Corps workshop on Resumix and Interviewing, stressing the importance of proper procedure.



Byron Williams, Planning, at the convention.



On-lookers gather at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers display.

UPDATES:

Sal Arcidiancono

Since February 20, Sal has been improving. His kidneys are functioning better and so are his lungs. They did a total body cat scan and found a small pocket of infection in his stomach. The next step will probably be a bone marrow biopsy to find out why his white count is so low. They have all the heads of departments meeting together trying to figure out what Sal's problem is.

Sal, who had surgery last month, has suffered a variety of complications from internal bleeding in the colon to having two infections, MRSA, which is treatable with an antibiotic known as Vancomycin and VRE, which is Vancomycin resistant.

However, doctors state that they will get him well, it will just take time.

Galveston District held a Corps wide prayer for Sal on February 20.



District Job Changes

Arthur Janecka

Promoted to Chief of Project Management

David Campbell

Promoted to Deputy Chief of Engineering

Bill Wise

Moved to Chief of Program Management

Newcomer's Orientation



COL Buechler speaks to the new employees.

For the first time in many years, a newcomer's orientation briefing was held in the Jadwin Building on Wednesday, February 15th. A few months ago a committee was formed and chaired by Major Ben Spears to plan the orientation and decide how often the briefings should be held.

After a welcome from COL Buechler, chiefs from each organization gave short briefings on what goes on in their area.

The turn out was excellent and participants were asked to give their comments on what could be improved or changed for the next newcomer's orientation.

UPDATES:

Tony Temple

Since February 7, Tony's condition has not changed. He has come out of his coma and is gradually "waking up".

He is not communicating verbally yet but he is improving. He has been moved to the sixth floor (6-D, Room 11) in John Sealy.

Please remember that Tony is on the leave sharing program. He is presently having to use advanced sick leave and only has one month of that left. Please kindly consider donating leave to him.

Johnnie Simmons

Johnnie Simmons' house burnt down on Saturday, 10 Feb 2001. Everyone escaped the fire unharmed and the family is staying with friends right now.

To off-set the family's immediate financial and domestic needs, RMO is collecting any monetary donations and clothing that you would like to give.

If you remember, Valerie Riedel's (RMO) home burned down in December. Everyone escaped the fire unharmed.

Survey: Federal Government is a Better Place to Work



The federal government is a better place to work than it was a year ago, according to the third annual survey of federal workers throughout the country. Where reinvention has been an agency priority, 84 percent of federal employees are satisfied with their jobs. The overall job satisfaction rate – 63 percent – is comparable to private industry.

“We know that in today’s competition for the most talented workers, the federal government will come up short if it doesn’t immediately move to improve its work environment,” said Morley Winograd, Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government.

“We began this survey to find out from employees what needed changing. The results show that agencies are responding successfully to employee concerns. We’ve made solid progress.”

Office of Personal Management Director Janice R. Lachance said, “The results of this survey are encouraging.” Organizations and their leaders must accept the fundamental premise that our people are our most valuable assets. People do the work. People make new technology efficient. People provide excellent customer service. And it is people who deliver results.”

Results of the survey, co-sponsored by the National Partnership for Reinventing Government and OPM, showed improvements in:

- Overall job satisfaction
- Recognition for doing good work
- Clear definitions of good performance
- Respect for difference among individuals
- Electronic access to information needed to do a good job

For the second consecutive year NASA ranked highest across the board while the Food and Drug Administration rated highest in job satisfaction. The Navy, Army and Department of Veterans Affairs showed the greatest improvement over the past year.

As in the first two surveys, federal employees gave the lowest ratings to the government hiring process. In addition, the percentage that said corrective actions are taken against non-productive co-workers actually declined.

The surveys were initiated in 1998 as a way to gauge federal employees’ perception of their workplace in the face of growing competition with private businesses for most able workers. This year’s 32-question survey was mailed in September to a random sample of employees in 49 government agencies. Forty-two percent of the surveys were returned. Complete survey results are located at www.employeesurvey.gov.

Winning the Battle with Insomnia

by Tracy Orr



If you have trouble getting a good night's sleep, you are definitely not alone. It is estimated that nearly 56 percent of American adults suffer from insomnia at least a few nights a week.

The social impact of sleepiness due to insomnia and other sleep disorders is immense. The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) estimates the direct economic costs of insomnia alone in the United States at close to \$14 billion!

Studies have shown that individuals suffering from insomnia have a higher rate of absenteeism at work, and report that they make more mistakes on the job. In fact, approximately 51 percent of the American work force reports that sleepiness on the job interferes with the quantity and quality of work that they do. Studies also show that people who don't get enough sleep generally lead a poorer quality of life. Lack of sleep can cause fatigue, loss of energy, and memory problems. In turn, fatigue is often linked to auto and industrial accidents.

Sleep-work patterns are governed by circadian rhythms (daily 24-hour cycles). As daylight fades, the cells in the retina of the eye send a message directly to a cluster of nerve cells called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SNA or circadian clock) located in the hypothalamus deep within the brain. The SNA then signals the pineal gland (also located in the brain) to produce the hormone "melatonin."

Melatonin is the brain's messenger that tells cells that daylight is ending and darkness is approaching. It causes a drop in body temperature and increases sleepiness. Ideally, the effects of melatonin cause you to fall asleep and remain that way. Unfortunately, if you suffer from insomnia, bedtime can become a source of anxiety.

Insomnia is characterized by difficulty falling asleep (sleep onset insomnia), waking frequently during the night (sleep maintenance insomnia), waking too early in the morning and being unable to

go back to sleep, and waking feeling unrefreshed. Insomnia can be transient (lasting for several days), intermittent, or chronic (lasting for a month or more).

Insomnia is a problem that has many underlying causes. These causes include, but are not limited to, depression, anxiety, and pain from medical illnesses such as arthritis.

Obviously, sleep is extremely important. The body needs its rest. Sleep deprivation, especially when it is ongoing, interferes with all aspects of a person's life. When you do not get enough sleep, the stress response is more readily activated and that depletes more nutrients. It also throws things off hormonally.

Whatever the cause, if you are suffering from insomnia, you are not getting adequate sleep to feel rested and rejuvenated.

Herbal remedies can be an effective way to get a good night's sleep. Examples are foods and herbs like Valerian and Chamomile, and homeopathic remedies. Herbs like Valerian are classified as nervines and have a true nerve tonic effect. Not only do they relax and sedate, but they also regenerate and help the nervous system to cope with stress better. This is an important difference between herbs and over-the-counter medications.

Vervain is another good nerve tonic. It is more mild than Valerian, Lady Slipper, and Hawthorne. Hawthorne is considered to be a tonic for cardiovascular disease, but it also helps relieve nervous insomnia.

Lemon Balm or Melissa is another herb that acts as both a sedative and stomach soother. Other recommended herbs to help fight insomnia are skull cap, passion flower, and lavender. A common naturopathic cure for insomnia is to take an Epsom salts bath approximately two hours prior to bedtime. Putting a little lavender oil in your bath can be helpful too.

Kava, an herb used to treat anxiety, can also help you to sleep. Kava is related more to stress and mental activity that accompanies insomnia. It is a

good nerve tonic.

In order to increase your body's sleep-inducing melatonin, homeopathic medicines are recommended. Homeopathic pineal or melatonin remedies work with and support the body's own production, helping the regenerate the pineal gland so it can produce the melatonin as it should.

Caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol can all interfere with sleep. Caffeine is found not only in coffee, tea, and many soft drinks, but also in many over-the-counter medications, such as those for headaches. Alcohol is deceptive because while it relaxes and can initially induce sleep, invariably it disrupts the deeper sleep cycles.

Some foods can also hinder sleep because they contain the amino acid "tyramine." Tyramine interferes with the brain's sleep chemistry. It is found in cheese and chocolate. Many of the nightshade family foods like tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, and spinach also hinder sleep.

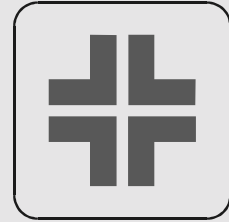
Foods relatively high in the amino acid "tryptophan," including turkey, tuna, whole grain crackers or bread, nuts, bananas, grapefruit, dates and figs, help make you sleepy. Tryptophan promotes the production of serotonin, a brain chemical that decrease brain cell activity.

There are several minerals that are also important in preventing insomnia. At the top of the list are calcium and magnesium. Silica, copper, and zinc are also important. The B vitamins, including niacin (B-3) and pyri-

doxine (B-6), help adjust your brain chemical balance. B vitamins are tied into much of the body's energy production cycle. Vitamin B-6 will stimulate the REM or dream state of sleep. However, keep in mind, that if the B vitamins or vitamin C are taken too close to bedtime, they can actually disrupt sleep.

The bottom line is to make your bedroom your sanctuary. Don't take your troubles to bed with you! Try to strip the bedroom of all association in your mind except for sleeping (and, of course, love-making). Don't use your bedroom as a place to think over today's battles or plan tomorrow's.

If possible, establish a countdown to bedtime. Actually start going to bed (mentally) an hour or two before you physically go to bed. Do this by having a cup of herbal tea, taking a hot bath, listening to some soothing music, or reading a relaxing book. Start now creating the habits of sleep. Begin relaxing two hours ahead of your bedtime instead of doing chores until the very last minute before you go to bed. If you do, you will sleep better and feel more refreshed and ready to face the world tomorrow. ***Sweet dreams!***



Blood Donors

Thanks to the following District employees who donated blood in January.

- Clark Bartee
- Ronny Beesley
- Rhonda Brown
- Donald Carelock
- Michelle Clark
- Clark Colquitt
- Paul Cox
- Ryan Fordyce
- Brenda Hayden
- Edward Huff
- Bill Jakeway
- Barbara Johnson
- John Machol
- Cecil McClenan
- Carl Mertz
- Tracy Orr
- Valerie Riedel
- Charles Stimmel
- Thomas Reginald

IF YOU'VE GONE OFF THE ROAD



Submitted by Dan Wyatt

You are cruising along the freeway with a group of friends when someone in the back seat tells a joke you haven't heard. "What?" you ask and turn your head slightly to catch the punch line. Suddenly you hear a rumbling sound and feel a tugging to the right of the steering wheel. You have allowed a wheel to go off the road. What should you do?

Hold the Wheel Firmly

When one or two of your wheels are off the road, the vehicle will pull in the direction of the shoulder, especially if the surface is soft. Hold the steering wheel firmly to keep your vehicle from going even further off the road.

If the shoulder is lower than the pavement, your wheel may catch against the edge and hold you there as if you are riding a rail. This can be disastrous if you reach a spot where the shoulder is the same level as the pavement. At that point, your hold on the wheel will suddenly be released and your vehicle may veer into oncoming traffic.

Size up the situation. Look ahead to see if there are culverts or other obstructions coming up. Notice how wide and soft the shoulder looks. If there's no immediate obstruction, straddle the road's edge, leaving six to 12 inches between the wheels on the shoulder and the edge of the pavement.

Slow down, but lift your foot off the gas pedal gradually. If you do it abruptly, it can disrupt the car's balance. Should you have to slow quickly to avoid a culvert, for example, brake in gentle, pumping motion. Keep in mind that your tires are on different surfaces and will respond to braking differently.

One Sharp Motion

When the car has slowed enough for you to feel in control, make a sharp right turn, followed by an immediate left turn toward the pavement. Hitting the pavement edge at a more acute angle will reduce chances that the tire will catch and "rail."

You can avoid the entire situation if you always drive 12 seconds ahead of yourself. By seeing where your vehicle will be in 12 seconds, you have enough time to slow down without leaving the pavement if danger arises.

Practice Evasive Maneuvers

Tires have different amounts of grip on different types of surfaces. If you suddenly try to control that grip by braking, accelerating, or steering sharply, your car may react in ways you don't expect.

Find out how differing degrees of steering, braking, and acceleration can affect your car's behavior. Practice these maneuvers in a safe place.



February

Birthdays

Nettie Irvine - Feb. 3
Lisa Arneson - Feb. 8

Corps Kids



Congratulation to **Payge Orr** and the Galveston "Twisters" Under-12 girl's soccer team

for capturing second place in the Cy-Fair Valentines Tournament held on February 3 and 4. Payge scored 2 goals and had 2 assists in the tournament. She is the daughter of **Tracy Orr of the Regulatory Branch**.

Anniversaries

Roseanne Theobald (PM-G) and her husband, **Gene**, celebrated ten years of marriage on February 2. "We still actually like each other, enjoy each other's company and we've never had a fight???!!!!"



Nancy Young (EC-EG) celebrated her wedding anniversary on the 14th of February. She and her husband, **Earl**, have been married for 16 years.

Speechmakers



Dan Wyatt, Chief of Safety, presented some recommendations

regarding dredge safety to about 60 members of Lake-wood Yacht Club on Sunday, February 11, 2001. The information was especially pertinent in view of the recent fatality that occurred on the Houston Ship Channel near Light 82 involving a Galveston District contractor.

With Thanks

Cleta Powers (RMO) and her family appreciate the kind thoughts,



prayers, the visitations and advice given at the time of our sorrows. The flowers were beautiful from Corps of Engineers and the Resource Management Office. Randy's passing was so sudden and unexpected. We are really going to miss him. As you know, we were married over 45 years. He was my best friend and buddy as well as a good husband and father to his children and grandfather to his grandson.

Recreation Committee

Engineer Day has been scheduled for June 15. Maybe it is a little early to be thinking about Engineer Day, but your Recreation Committee has begun planning for the event already.

The Recreation Committee would like to reinstitute the Engineer Day T-Shirt Contest. So put on your thinking caps and get out your artistic pencils and begin thinking about your design. We will officially kick off the design contest on 28 February with the judging and selection of best design on 26 March. We want to have official Engineer Day T-shirts available to be worn on Engineer Day.

Rules for the contest are being developed (by committee) so it will be a while before they are published. But we have already decided that second prize will be \$25 and first prize will be \$50 and a free T-shirt. Judging will be done by a select group of your peers. We know there are a lot of creative people on Team Galveston, so start thinking about your designs!

Upcoming Events

March 1-2
**Communications Plan
with Michael Logue**

March 8
**Farewell to
MAJ Randy Turner**

March 13
**PRB Meeting
Bake Sale**

March 15
**Public Meeting with
Clear Creek**

March 20 and 23
Media Training

March 21
PRB with Division

March 22
Safety Meeting

March 23
**Col. Basilotto's Class
comes to visit
Gavleston District**

March 28
**Aransas Project
Dedication Ceremony**



Photos courtesy of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge